

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly Newscast

September 13th, 2013

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Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

investigators (people looking for the truth about a crime)	upsetting (makes people unhappy)
deny (say something is not true)	run (manage)
claims (statements that something is true, but have not been proven)	organization (group formed for a reason)
evidence (proof something is true)	contract (signed agreement)
patient (a person receiving medical treatment)	

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

lobby group: a group that tries to change the government's opinion about an issue

dementia: an illness in which you lose the ability to think normally and often lose your memory

long-term care facility: a place similar to a seniors home with more nursing staff and doctors

1. It is always _____ when someone you love suffers from dementia.
2. Many people belong to religious _____ which do many activities to help their communities. Some groups _____ soup kitchens to feed the poor.
3. The lobby group made _____ about pollution created by the government project. The government says there is no _____ to show their project is responsible for the pollution
4. _____ need to look for proof before they decide who is at fault.
5. When I started my job, I signed a _____ that explained my responsibilities.
6. The student _____ that she cheated on the exam; she says she was only checking her phone for messages.
7. I was a _____ at that hospital, because I had to have an operation last year.

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true** or **false**. Write your answers in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ A lobby group made upsetting claims about a long-term care home in Lethbridge.
2. ____ They said that mice were biting many patients at St. Therese Villa.
3. ____ A Catholic organization, Covenant Health, runs St. Therese Villa.
4. ____ The lobby group, Friends of Medicare, has contracts with the provincial government.
5. ____ Friends of Medicare say there is no evidence the patient was bitten by a mouse.
6. ____ Covenant Health has started a special investigation.

Discussion Questions

Have you ever had to stay in a hospital? What was your experience like? How were the staff and the facilities?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. rocker	a) to be possible to harm or destroy something
	2. harsh	b) a large meeting where people discuss important issues
	3. oil sands	c) in or around the area; nearby; not far away
	4. conference	d) destroyed
	5. wasteland	e) very unkind
	6. threaten	f) people with similar beliefs working together to achieve a goal
	7. wasted	g) a musician that plays rock music
	8. treaty	h) land/environment destroyed by human activity
	9. local	i) oil mixed with sand, mostly found in northern Alberta
	10. movement	j) a written agreement or contract between groups

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

not sitting well: makes people feel uncomfortable

oil sands: taking the oil out of the ground destroys huge amounts of the land and creates pollution. There is a lot of global discussion about the environmental impact of working in the oil sands.

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. While in Washington, Canadian rocker Neil Young _____ for the oil sands in Fort McMurray.	a) discussed the pollution b) had some harsh words
2. He told a National Farmers Union conference, "Fort McMurray looks like Hiroshima, _____"	a) Fort McMurray is a natural wetland." b) Fort McMurray is a wasteland."
3. Neil Young then explained that the people of Fort McMurray _____ because of the oil sands.	a) are sick and dying of cancer b) are poor and hungry
4. Young explained that _____ are threatened by the oil sands and their treaties are no good.	a) local inhabitants b) First Nations people
5. People in Fort McMurray are _____.	a) sitting and thinking about Young's claims. b) not happy about Young's claims.
6. A local radio station stopped playing Neil Young's music and _____ on twitter.	a) started a movement b) began a discussion

Discussion Questions

Should celebrities be encouraged to support issues they feel strongly about? Do you think the public should listen to celebrities' opinions?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
	1) on hold	a) forbid not allow
	2) stores	b) giving control passing management to another person
	3) treaty	c) correctly according to plan
	4) ban	d) stock; a supply of something storage facilities
	5) drop	e) paused temporarily stopped
	6) handover	f) agreement contract
	7) properly	g) stop doing something withdraw

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. What is on hold for now?
2. What has the Syrian government agreed to do with its chemical weapons?
3. What has the Syrian government agreed to sign?
4. How long will it take for the Syrian government to complete these agreements?
5. What must the US do before the Syrian government agrees to the above conditions?
6. What does the U.S. Secretary of State say?

Discussion Questions

What do you think the world should do about Syria's use of chemical weapons? Do you think countries should police/control each other about matters of weapons?

Present tense or Past tense

Sometimes when we hear the news they use the simple present verb tense. Other times we hear the simple past. It is important to know when to use each verb tense, and to identify why the author chose to use that tense in that sentence.

We use the present tense	We use the past tense
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• when we talk about something that is true in the present<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ It <i>is</i> beautiful outside today.• when we report facts or say something that is always true<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Edmonton <i>is</i> cold in the winter.• when we talk about habitual actions (things that occur regularly)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ I <i>go</i> to school.• when we use adverbs of frequency (sometimes, often, always...)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ I <i>sometimes</i> study English.• when we explain an action set by a timetable or schedule<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ English class <i>begins</i> at 9am.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• when we talk about an action in the past that happened once, never or many times<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ He <i>visited</i> his parents yesterday.• when we report actions in the past taking place one after the other<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ She <i>walked</i> in the room, <i>sat</i> down and <i>began</i> to take notes.• when we talk about an action in the past taking place in the middle of another action<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ While I was having breakfast, the phone <i>rang</i>.• when we use the type II conditional<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ If I <i>had</i> a lot of money, I would buy a new car.

Let's look at the sentences in the second story more carefully. You can see the author uses both the present tense and the past tense. Can you identify the verb tense of each verb highlighted? Can you explain why the author chose to use that verb tense? The first two are done for you.

1. Canadian rocker Neil Young had some harsh words for the oil sands in Fort McMurray during an event in Washington, D.C. (Past tense – this occurred once in the past)
2. He told a National Farmers Union conference, "Fort McMurray looks like Hiroshima. Fort McMurray is a wasteland." (Present tense – true in the present)
3. He went on to say "People are sick. People are dying of cancer because of this.
4. All the First Nations people up there are threatened by this.
5. Their food supply is wasted, their treaties are no good."
6. Young's comments are not sitting well with many people in Fort McMurray. (_____ continuous)
7. A local radio station stopped playing his music and started a movement on twitter.

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

	SEPTEMBER 13 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, this is Carla Beynon and you're listening to Learning English with CBC for September 13 th .	0:00
Story 1	Alberta Health investigators are looking into some upsetting claims at a long-term care home in Lethbridge. A lobby group called "Friends of Medicare," says staff at St. Therese Villa found mice biting a dementia patient's face. St. Therese Villa is run by a Catholic organization called "Covenant Health." It has contracts with the provincial government. Covenant Health says there is no evidence that the patient was bitten by a mouse and denies the claims. The provincial government has started a special investigation.	0:10
Story 2	Canadian rocker Neil Young had some harsh words for the oil sands in Fort McMurray during an event in Washington, D.C. He told a National Farmers Union conference, "Fort McMurray looks like Hiroshima. Fort McMurray is a wasteland." He went on to say, "People are sick. People are dying of cancer because of this. All the First Nations people up there are threatened by this. Their food supply is wasted, their treaties are no good." Young's comments are not sitting well with many people in Fort McMurray. A local radio station stopped playing his music and started a movement on twitter.	0:49
Story 3	An American military attack on Syria is on hold, for now. The government has agreed to put its stores of chemical weapons under international control, and sign the international treaty that bans these weapons. Syria's president says that will all take at least a month, and only if the United States drops any threat of military action. The U.S. Secretary of State says that is not going to happen. According to John Kerry, if the weapons handover doesn't happen properly and quickly, an attack would still be possible.	1:36

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

1. It is always upsetting when someone you love suffers from dementia.
2. Many people belong to religious organizations which do many activities to help their communities. Some groups run soup kitchens to feed the poor.
3. The lobby group made claims about pollution created by the government project. The government says there is no evidence to show their project is responsible for the pollution.
4. Investigators need to look at the situation carefully and decide who is at fault.
5. When I started my job, I signed a contract that explained my responsibilities.
6. The student denies that she cheated on the exam; she says she was only checking her phone for messages.
7. I was a patient at that hospital, because I had to have an operation last year.

Listening

1. T A lobby group made upsetting claims about a long-term care home in Lethbridge.
2. F They said that mice were biting many patients at St. Therese Villa.
3. T A Catholic organization, Covenant Health, runs St. Therese Villa.
4. F The lobby group, Friends of Medicare, has contracts with the provincial government.
5. F Friends of Medicare say there is no evidence the patient was bitten by a mouse.
6. F Covenant Health has started a special investigation.

News story 2

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
<u>g</u>	1. rocker	a) to be possible to harm or destroy something
<u>e</u>	2. harsh	b) a large meeting where people discuss important issues
<u>i</u>	3. oil sands	c) in or around the area; nearby; not far away
<u>b</u>	4. conference	d) destroyed
<u>h</u>	5. wasteland	e) very unkind
<u>a</u>	6. threaten	f) people with similar beliefs working together to achieve a goal
<u>d</u>	7. wasted	g) a musician that plays rock music
<u>j</u>	8. treaty	h) land/environment destroyed by human activity
<u>c</u>	9. local	i) oil mixed with sand, mostly found in northern Alberta
<u>f</u>	10. movement	j) a written agreement or contract between groups

Listening

1. While in Washington, Canadian rocker Neil Young _____ for the oil sands in Fort McMurray.	a) discussed the pollution b) had some harsh words
2. He told a National Farmers Union conference, "Fort McMurray looks like Hiroshima, _____"	a) Fort McMurray is a natural wetland." b) Fort McMurray is a wasteland."
3. Neil Young then explained that the people of Fort McMurray _____ because of the oil sands.	a) are sick and dying of cancer b) are poor and hungry
4. Young explained that _____ are threatened by the oil sands and their treaties are no good.	a) local inhabitants b) First Nations people
5. People in Fort McMurray are _____.	a) sitting and thinking about Young's claims. b) not happy about Young's claims.
6. A local radio station stopped playing Neil Young's music and _____ on twitter.	a) started a movement b) began a discussion

News story 3

Vocabulary

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
e	1) on hold	a) forbid not allow
d	2) stores	b) giving control passing management to another person
f	3) treaty	c) correctly according to plan
a	4) ban	d) stock; a supply of something storage facilities
g	5) drop	e) paused temporarily stopped
b	6) handover	f) agreement contract
c	7) properly	g) stop doing something withdraw

Listening

1. What is on hold for now? *An American military attack on Syria is on hold.*
2. What has the Syrian government agreed to do with its chemical weapons? *The government has agreed to put its stores of chemical weapons under international control.*

3. What has the Syrian government agreed to sign? *It has agreed to sign the international treaty that bans these weapons.*
4. How long will it take for the Syrian government to complete these agreements? *It will take at least a month.*
5. What must the US do before the Syrian government agrees to the above conditions? *The United States must drop any threat of military action.*
6. What does the U.S. Secretary of State say? *He says that dropping any threat of US military action is not going to happen. He says if the weapons handover doesn't happen properly and quickly, an attack would still be possible.*

Language focus

1. Canadian rocker Neil Young **had** some harsh words for the oil sands in Fort McMurray during an event in Washington, D.C. (**Past tense** – this occurred once in the past)
2. He told a National Farmers Union conference, "Fort McMurray **looks** like Hiroshima. Fort McMurray **is** a wasteland." (**Present tense** – true in the present)
3. He **went** on to say "People **are** sick. People are dying of cancer because of this. (**Past tense** – what Young said in Washington. **Present tense** – true (according to Young) today)
4. All the First Nations people up there **are** threatened by this. (**Present tense** – true in the present)
5. Their food supply **is** wasted, their treaties **are** no good." (**Present tense** – true in the present)
6. Young's comments **are not sitting** well with many people in Fort McMurray. (**present continuous** – still ongoing)
7. A local radio station **stopped** playing his music and **started** a movement on twitter. (**Past tense** – actions took place in the past one after another)